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Chamber of Commerce holds its annual "meet the Board networking event"

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Ukraine aid support softens in the U.S.: AP-NORC Poll

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Support among the American public for providing Ukraine weaponry and direct economic assistance has softened as the Russian invasion nears a grim one-year milestone, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Forty-eight percent say they favor the U.S. providing weapons to Ukraine, with 29% opposed and 22% saying they're neither in favor nor opposed. In May 2022, less than three months into the war, 60% of U.S. adults said they were in favor of sending Ukraine weapons. Americans are about evenly divided on sending government funds directly to Ukraine, with 37% in favor and 38% opposed, with 23% saying neither. The signs of diminished support for Ukraine come as President Joe Biden is set to travel to Poland next week to mark the first anniversary of the biggest conflict in Europe since World War II. "I am sympathetic for Ukraine's situation and I feel badly for them, but I feel like we need to first take care of priorities here at home," said Joe Hernandez, 44, of Rocklin, California.

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Vice President Kamala Harris and then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of Calif., right, react as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy presents lawmakers with a Ukrainian flag autographed by front-line troops in Bakhmut, in Ukraine's contested Donetsk province, as he addresses a joint meeting of Congress on Capitol Hill in Wednesday, Dec. 21, 2022.

Associated Press

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Ukraine aid support softens in the U.S.: AP-NORC Poll

Continued from Front

Hernandez, a Republican, added that it's difficult to support generous U.S. spending on military and economic assistance to Ukraine when many American communities don't have the resources to deal with the ramifications of migrants crossing into the U.S. at the southern border, a rise in drug overdoses caused by fentanyl and other lab-produced synthetic opioids, and a homelessness crisis in his state. Biden has repeatedly stated that the United States will help Ukraine "as long as it takes" to repel the Russian invasion that began on Feb. 24 of last year. Privately, administration officials have warned Ukrainian officials that there is a limit to the patience of a narrowly divided Congress — and American public — for the costs of a war with no clear end. Congress approved about \$113 billion in economic, humanitarian and military spending in 2022.

The poll shows 19% of Americans have a great deal of confidence in Biden's ability to handle the situation in Ukraine, while 37% say they have only some confidence and 43% have hardly any.

Views of Biden's handling of the war divide largely along partisan lines. Among Democrats, 40% say they have a great deal of confidence in Biden to handle the situation, 50% have some confidence and 9% have hardly any. Among Republicans, a large majority (76%) say they have hardly any confidence. Those numbers are largely unchanged since last May.

Janice Fortado, 78, of Ipswich, Massachusetts, said Biden deserves credit for his handling of the war. She agreed with Biden's hesitance early in the war about sending advanced and offensive weaponry out of concern that it would give Russian President Vladimir Putin a pretext to expand the war beyond Ukraine and spur a larger global conflict.

But as the war has dragged



President Joe Biden speaks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as they meet in the Oval Office of the White House, Dec. 21, 2022, in Washington.

Associated Press

on — and Ukrainian forces have held up against a more formidable Russian military — some of that resistance has melted away. Biden has approved sending light multiple rocket launchers known as HIMARS, Patriot missile systems, Bradley fighting vehicles, Abrams tanks, and more. Biden, however, continues to balk at Ukraine's request for fighter jets.

"As my opinion evolved, I came to wish we had offered more to Ukraine sooner," said Fortado, a Democrat, who added that she hopes the U.S. and allies change their mind on the fighter jets. "We seem to have done a drip, drip, drip. I understand why it is they were hesitant, but we are now beyond that point."

House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., before winning the speakership, vowed that Republicans wouldn't write a "blank check" for Ukraine once they were in charge. And some of the most right-leaning Republicans lashed out at Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell of Ken-

tucky over his support of a \$1.7 trillion spending bill passed in December that included about \$47 billion for Ukraine.

Alex Hoxeng, 37, of Midland, Texas, said he expected Republicans to take a tougher line on Ukraine spending.

"I think Biden isn't worried enough about inflation," said Hoxeng, a Republican. "We should just stay out of it. Ukraine is halfway around the world and we have our own problems."

A majority of Americans, 63%, still favor imposing economic sanctions on Russia, the poll shows, though that too has decreased from the 71% who said that in May 2022.

And 59% say limiting damage to the U.S. economy is more important than effectively sanctioning Russia, even if that means sanctions are less effective. Almost a year ago, in March 2022, the situation was reversed: 55% said it was a bigger priority to sanction Russia effectively, even if it meant damage to the U.S. economy.

Shandi Carter, 51, of Big

Spring, Texas, said she's become frustrated with the global ramifications the war has had on consumers, including volatile gas prices and increasing food costs. Carter, who tends to vote Republican, said she's been displeased with Biden's handling of the crisis but doesn't think Donald Trump would have done any better had he won the 2020 election.

"I just wish it was over. I wish it had never started," Carter said. "It didn't matter if there was a Democrat or Republican there. Putin was going to do what he wanted to do."

Overall, the poll shows that about a quarter of Americans, 26%, now say the U.S. should have a major role in the situation, down from as high as 40% in March 2022. Still, 49% say the U.S. should have a minor role, and just 24% say it should have no role.

Since last March, the percentage of Democrats saying the U.S. should have a major role has dipped slightly from 48% to 40%, while among Republicans it has dropped from 35%

to 17%. Democrats also remain more likely than Republicans to favor imposing economic sanctions on Russia (75% to 60%), accepting refugees from Ukraine (73% to 42%), providing weapons to Ukraine (63% to 39%) and sending government funds to Ukraine (59% to 21%). Support has softened at least slightly among both Democrats and Republicans since last May.

Tom Sadauskas, 68, a political independent from northern Virginia, said he doesn't believe an end to the war is near. That makes him worried about the direction of American support for a conflict that he believes could have reverberations far beyond Ukraine if Putin is successful. "I worry that as a country we get easily distracted," said Sadauskas, who approves of Biden's handling of the war thus far. "It's easy to say, 'It's a faraway country. That it really doesn't matter.' But if Ukraine goes, what is our attitude going to be when Putin decides to move on and threaten one of our smaller neighboring NATO countries?" □

States' push to define sex decried as erasing trans people

By JOHN HANNA
AP Political Writer

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — Adam Kellogg was a nerdy 16-year-old preparing to board a flight from Kansas City to Florida for a space and science camp trip to Cape Canaveral when security held him up for 30 minutes because his driver's license identified him as female.

Three years later, the University of Kansas student's driver's license identifies him as male, but legislative proposals in at least eight states could prevent transgender people like him from changing their driver's licenses and birth certificates. The Republican-controlled Kansas Legislature is considering a bill that would define male and female in state law and base people's legal gender identities on their anatomy at birth.

Nationally, conservatives are pushing dozens of proposals in statehouses to restrict transgender athletes, gender-affirming care and drag shows. But in measures like Kansas', LGBTQ-rights advocates see a new, sweeping effort to erase trans people's legal existence, deny recognition to nonbinary or gender-fluid people and ignore those who are intersex people born with genitalia, reproductive organs, chromosomes and/or hormone levels that don't fit typical definitions for male or female.

"Something that's really important for me is being able to just simply exist as a man, not even think about it," Kellogg said this week while visiting the Statehouse with other transgender people and LGBTQ advocates.

Kellogg laughs now about his experience at the airport, but it was no laughing matter at the time. Back then, he bound the breasts that he'd later have surgically removed and, "They thought I had a bomb strapped to me."

Doctors say reproductive anatomy at birth doesn't always align with strict definitions of sex and that binary views of sexual iden-

tity can miss biological nuances.

LGBTQ-rights advocates say having a driver's license

that lawmakers are considering a resolution that would urge public schools and other "public entities"

"developed to fertilize the ova."

It's not clear how far the measure will go, though

choose to live."

In North Dakota, Republican state Rep. SuAnn Olson decried what she called "radical gender ideologues" and said they want to redefine womanhood as a subjective state. In Kansas, conservative activist and Statehouse lobbyist Phillip Cosby called young people's increased identity as transgender or nonbinary "a social contagion."

Dr. Kristyn Brandi, a fellow with the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, said she doesn't automatically assume female reproductive anatomy means female gender. "It's helpful to know what anatomical structures are present when I'm doing an exam, when I'm recommending tests," she said. "I often ask my patient, how do they like to be identified? And I go with that."

Brandi also said proclaiming that sex is binary ignores that intersex conditions and differences in gender identity exist.

At birth, external genital anatomy can be ambiguous, sometimes because of differences in sex development, or intersex conditions, which affect about 1% of the population.

Intersex conditions can involve external genitals that don't match a person's sex chromosomes. In one condition, testes develop internally but external genitals and breasts appear female.

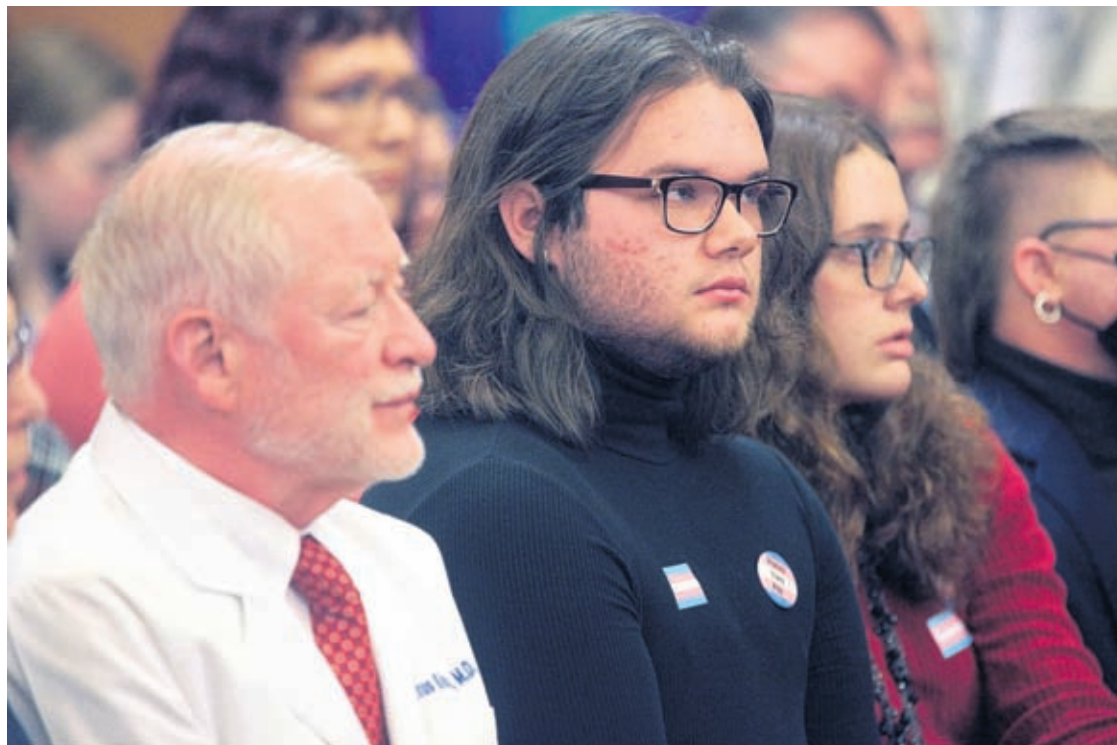
These babies are usually assigned female at birth, but their bodies will never produce eggs.

"There's variation," Brandi said. "Not everyone fits into this exact box."

Jae Moyer, a Kansas City-area activist, has a driver's license and birth certificate identifying them as male, although they identify as nonbinary.

The Kansas measure feels designed to force them into "molds that I personally don't fit into."

"They want to make sure that they're taking every avenue possible to just erase who I am as a person," Moyer said. □



Adam Kellogg, center, a University of Kansas student and transgender man, follows a Kansas Senate health committee hearing on legislation aimed at preventing gender-affirming care for minors, Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2023, at the Statehouse in Topeka, Kan.

Associated Press

or birth certificate confirm a transgender person's identity is important by itself but also can prevent daily hassles or harassment. They believe Kansas' bill also would prevent transgender people from using restrooms and other facilities aligned with their gender identities.

Republicans have put transgender issues at the center of their agenda, a tactic that many observers see as an effort to keep conservative voters energized and to push voters sympathetic to Democrats on other issues into the GOP camp. In the Republican response to President Joe Biden's State of the Union address, Arkansas Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders derided the Democratic president as "the first man to surrender his presidency to a woke mob that can't even tell you what a woman is."

The Kansas bill had a hearing Wednesday before the state Senate's health committee and is similar to a Republican measure introduced in the U.S. House last year. Oklahoma's Legislature is weighing a similar proposal, while North Da-

kota lawmakers are considering a resolution that would urge public schools and other "public entities" to distinguish "between the sexes according to biological sex at birth." Mississippi lawmakers had three proposals like Kansas', but none advanced this year. New Hampshire, Tennessee and Texas also have proposals to define male and female in state law, and a Republican lawmaker in South Carolina has proposed an amendment to the state's constitution to declare that legally, a person's gender would be based on anatomy at birth, not a "psychological, chosen, or subjective experience of gender."

"They're afraid of what they don't understand," said Luc Bensimon, a transgender man who serves on Topeka's anti-discrimination commission and is an activist for the Black Trans Advocacy Coalition. "Anything or any lifestyle that is different or outside the norm, they're not OK."

The Kansas measure would declare that legally, "sex" means "biological" sex, "either male or female, at birth." It says females have a reproductive system "developed to produce ova," while males have one

the state Senate committee could vote on it next week. Democratic Gov. Laura Kelly twice vetoed bills to ban transgender athletes from girls' and women's club, K-12 and college sports, and she opposes restricting gender affirming care.

Supporters of the Kansas bill contend that they're responding to parents and others who are uncomfortable with "biological men" or "biological boys" sharing spaces meant for women and girls especially bathrooms and locker rooms but also prisons and domestic violence shelters.

They also are trying to frame the debate as protecting the rights of "biological" women, and the Kansas bill is called, "The Women's Bill of Rights."

In Kansas, Republican state Sen. Renee Erickson, the Senate health committee's vice chair, asked it to sponsor the measure. A former college basketball player, she has also led the push to restrict transgender athletes. She said defining male and female in state law would not prevent anyone from "living how they

Judge to Trump: Too late to offer DNA to rebut rape claim

By LARRY NEUMEISTER

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Former President Donald Trump missed his chance to use his DNA to try to prove he didn't rape a longtime magazine advice columnist, a federal judge said Wednesday, clearing away a potential roadblock to an April trial.

Judge Lewis A. Kaplan rejected the 11th-hour offer by Trump's legal team to provide a DNA sample to rebut claims E. Jean Carroll first made publicly in a 2019 book.

Kaplan said that lawyers for Trump and Carroll had over three years to make DNA an issue in the case and that both chose not to do so. He said it would almost surely delay the trial scheduled to start April 25 to reopen the DNA issue four months after the deadline passed to litigate concerns over trial evidence and just weeks before trial.

Trump's lawyers did not immediately comment on Kaplan's ruling. Carroll's



Former President Donald Trump speaks at a campaign event at the South Carolina Statehouse on Jan. 28, 2023, in Columbia, S.C.

Associated Press

attorney, Roberta Kaplan, declined to comment.

Carroll's lawyers have sought Trump's DNA sample for three years to compare it with stains found on the dress Carroll wore the day she says Trump raped her in an upscale Man-

hattan department store dressing room in late 1995 or early 1996. An analysis of DNA on the dress concluded it did contain traces of an unknown man's DNA.

Trump has denied knowing Carroll and said repeatedly, and sometimes angrily,

that he never raped Carroll and that she was making the claim to stoke sales of her book.

After refusing to provide Trump's DNA sample, his lawyers recently switched tactics, saying they would provide his DNA if Carroll's

lawyers turned over the full DNA report on the dress.

And the judge noted that the report did not find evidence of sperm cells and that reopening the dispute would raise a "complicated new subject into this case that both sides elected not to pursue over a period of years."

He said that a positive match of Trump's DNA to that on the dress would prove only that there had been an encounter between Trump and Carroll on a day when she wore the dress, but that it would not prove or disprove that a rape occurred and might prove entirely inconclusive. Kaplan added: "His conditional invitation to open a door that he kept closed for years threatens to change the nature of a trial for which both parties now have been preparing for years."

Whether Mr. Trump's application is intended for a dilatory purpose or not, the potential prejudice to Ms. Carroll is apparent." □

Waters off New England had 2nd warmest year on record in '22



Lobster fishermen work at sunrise, Thursday, Sept. 8, 2022, off Kennebunkport, Maine.

Associated Press

By PATRICK WHITTLE

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — The waters off New England, which are home to rare whales and most of the American lobster fishing industry, logged the second-warmest year on record last year.

The Gulf of Maine, a body of water about the size of Indiana that touches

Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Canada, is warming faster than the vast majority of the world's oceans. Last year fell short of setting a new high mark for hottest year by less than half a degree Fahrenheit, said scientists with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, a science center in Portland.

The average sea surface

temperature was 53.66 degrees (12 degrees Celsius), more than 3.7 degrees above the 40-year average, the scientists said. The accelerated warming is changing an ecosystem that's host to numerous important commercial fishing industries, especially for lobsters, they said.

One implication is that the warming is driving species more associated with southern waters into the Gulf of Maine and altering its food chain, said Janet Duffy-Anderson, chief scientific officer with the institute. That includes species such as black sea bass, which prey on lobsters.

"Who will be the emergent species and who will be the species that decline is, in large part, a function of those interactions," said Duffy-Anderson. "At the moment, we're not in a period of stability."

The gulf is the nerve center of the lobster fishing busi-

ness, which has recorded heavy catches over the past 10 years. However, lobster fisheries in more southern waters have collapsed, and scientists have placed the blame on warming temperatures.

The Gulf of Maine is also a key area for marine mammals such as the North Atlantic right whale, which numbers only about 340, and sea birds such as Atlantic puffins. Those species and many others are threatened by disruptions in their food supply due to warming waters.

The environmental factors accompanying high temperatures in the Gulf of Maine include persistent, intense heatwaves, according to a report released by Gulf of Maine Research Institute on Wednesday.

The warming is also coming at a time when the world's oceans are heating up. Last year was the third-warmest year for global

sea surface temperature, the report said.

"What is being observed in the Gulf of Maine (and elsewhere around the world), however, is a loss of that balance: larger fractions of recent years are experiencing above average temperatures and cold spells are becoming vanishingly rare," the report said.

The hottest year in the Gulf of Maine was 2021, according to records that go back to 1982, the institute said. That year, the average annual sea surface temperature was slightly more than 54 degrees (12.2 degrees Celsius). Last year was a fraction of a percent warmer than the third warmest year, which was 2012.

Those three years are the only ones in recorded history in which the gulf's average temperature exceeded 53 degrees (11.7 degrees Celsius). □

Scottish leader Sturgeon quits with independence goal unmet

By DANICA KIRKA

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Scottish leader Nicola Sturgeon said Wednesday that she plans to step down after more than eight years in office, amid criticism of her drive to expand transgender rights and her strategy for achieving independence from the United Kingdom. Sturgeon made the surprise announcement during a news conference at her official residence in Edinburgh, Bute House, saying the decision wasn't a response to the "latest period of pressure." But she added that part of serving well was knowing when to make way for someone else.

"In my head and in my heart I know that time is now," she said. "That it's right for me, for my party and my country."

Sturgeon, 52, has led Scotland since 2014, when Scots narrowly voted to remain part of the United Kingdom. While the referendum was billed as a once-in-a-generation decision on independence, Sturgeon and her Scottish National Party have pushed for a new vote, arguing that Britain's departure from the European Union had changed the ground rules.

The first female leader of Scotland's devolved government, Sturgeon won praise for her calm, measured public communications during the pandemic a contrast to the erratic messaging of then-U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

She led her party to dominance in Scottish politics but leaves office with the goal of her political life independence unfulfilled.

Sturgeon said she planned to remain in office until the SNP elects a new leader. Scotland is part of the U.K. but, like Wales and Northern Ireland, has its own semi-autonomous government with broad powers over areas including health care.

Sturgeon's announcement caught political observers by surprise amid her



Nicola Sturgeon speaks during a press conference at Bute House in Edinburgh, Wednesday, Feb. 15 2023.

staunch support for both independence and legislation that would make it easier for people in Scotland to legally change genders. Just two weeks ago she scoffed at resignation rumors, saying she still had "plenty in the tank."

"This is as sudden as Jacinda Ardern ... Geez," tweeted SNP lawmaker Angus MacNeil, referring to the resignation last month of New Zealand's prime minister. Sturgeon came under pressure in recent weeks after she pushed the gender recognition bill through the Scottish parliament over the objections of some members of her own party. That raised concerns that Sturgeon's position on transgender rights could undermine support for independence, the SNP's overarching goal.

Joanna Cherry, an SNP member of Parliament who opposes the new gender law, said the resignation provided an opportunity for the party.

"We must restore the SNP's tradition of internal party democracy, open respectful debate and intellectual rigour and we must also put the welfare of everyone living in Scotland back at the heart of our endeavours," Cherry said on Twitter.

Sturgeon said she had been "wrestling" with whether

it was time step down for weeks. She said she wasn't resigning because of recent criticism, though she acknowledged that the "physical and mental impact" of the job had taken their toll.

Sturgeon led Scotland through the coronavirus pandemic and guided her party during three U.K.-wide elections and two Scottish elections.

"If the question is, can I battle on for another few months, then the answer is yes, of course I can," she said. "But if the question is, can I give this job everything it demands and deserves for another year, let alone for the remainder of this parliamentary term, give it every ounce of energy that it needs in the way that I have strived to do every day for the last eight years, the answer honestly is different."

Sturgeon weathered a period of scandal after her predecessor and former mentor Alex Salmond was tried and acquitted in 2020 on charges of sexual assault and attempted rape. A parliamentary investigation found that Sturgeon had misled lawmakers about what she knew, though she was cleared of major wrongdoing. In 2021 Salmond opened a rift in the independence move-

ment by quitting the SNP to form a rival party, Alba.

For the past few months, much of Sturgeon's energy has been focused on a renewed drive for independence and the gender recognition bill, which would allow people aged 16 or older in Scotland to change the gender designations on identity documents by self-declaration, removing the need for a medical diagnosis of gender dysphoria.

Hailed as a landmark by transgender rights activists, the legislation faced opposition from some SNP members who said it ignored the need to protect single-sex spaces for women, such as domestic violence shelters and rape crisis centers. Criticism of the bill increased after reports that a convicted rapist was being held in a women's prison in Scotland while transitioning.

The inmate was transferred to a men's prison after being assessed by prison authorities.

While the Scottish parliament approved the legislation, it has been blocked by the British government because it would present problems for authorities in other parts of the U.K., where a medical diagnosis is needed before individuals can transition for legal purposes. □

Associated Press

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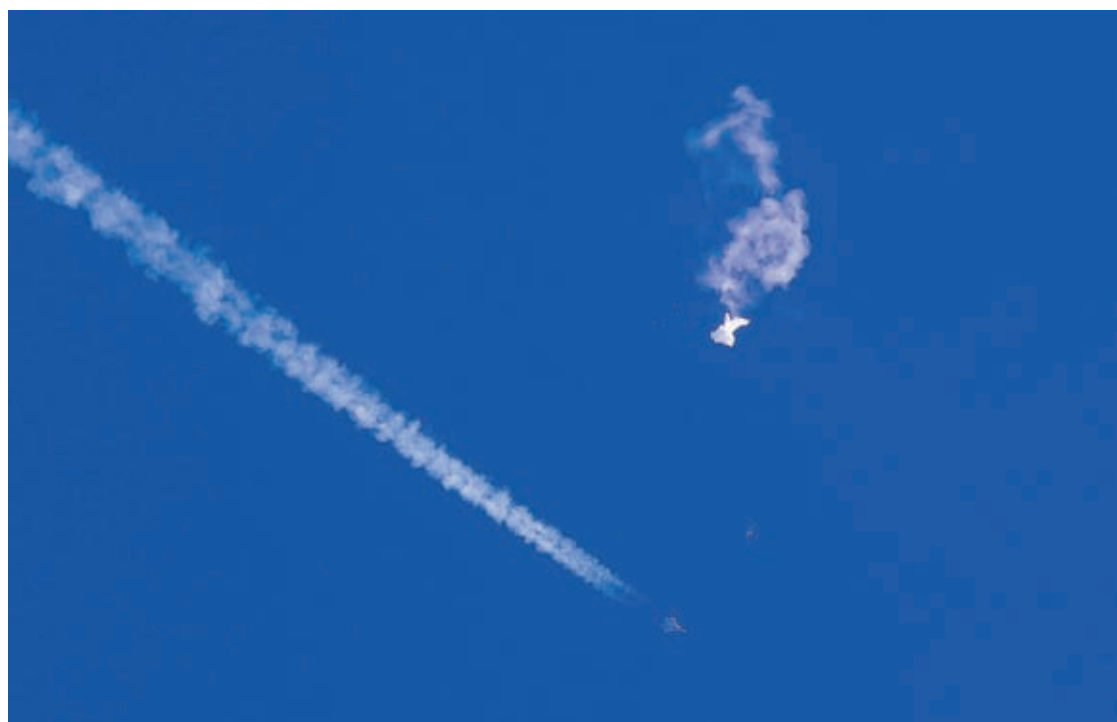
China threatens U.S. entities over downing of balloon

BEIJING (AP) — China said Wednesday it will take measures against U.S. entities related to the downing of a suspected Chinese spy balloon off the American East Coast.

At a daily briefing, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin gave no details and did not identify the targets of the measures.

China says the balloon was a unmanned weather airship that was accidentally blown off course and accuses the U.S. of overreacting in bringing it down with a missile fired from an F-22 fighter jet. Since the Feb. 4 downing of the balloon, the United States has sanctioned six Chinese entities it said are linked to Beijing's aerospace programs.

The U.S. House of Representatives subsequently voted unanimously to condemn China for a "brazen violation" of U.S. sovereignty and efforts to "deceive the international community through false claims about its intelligence collection campaigns." Secretary of State Antony Blinken also canceled a visit to Beijing that many hoped would stabilize ties that have cratered amid disputes over



In this photo provided by Chad Fish, the remnants of a large balloon drift above the Atlantic Ocean, just off the coast of South Carolina, with a fighter jet and its contrail seen below it, Feb. 4, 2023.

trade, human rights, Taiwan and China's claim to the South China Sea.

While China denies the balloon was a military asset, it has yet to say what government department or company was responsible.

After initially expressing regret over the balloon's entry into U.S. airspace, China has returned spying accusations against Washing-

ton, alongside its threats of retaliation.

"China firmly opposes this and will take countermeasures in accordance with the law against the relevant U.S. entities that undermine China's sovereignty and security," Wang said at Wednesday's briefing.

China will "resolutely safeguard national sovereignty and its legitimate rights and

interests," Wang said.

Also Wednesday, U.S. Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel said the Chinese balloon's intrusion was part of a pattern of aggressive behavior by Beijing.

Emanuel noted China's recent beaming of military-grade laser on a Philippine coast guard patrol vessel, the harassment of U.S. planes by Chinese jets and

China's opening of illegal police stations in the U.S., Ireland and other countries. "The balloon to me is not an isolated incident," Emanuel said.

If China wants to be a respected member of the international community, "then you act appropriately to certain basic premises, that is you don't open police stations in other countries ignorant of their laws as if your laws don't have any boundaries," he said.

"This is not exactly the qualities and characteristics of the good neighbor policy," the ambassador said, referring to China's outreach to countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

On Tuesday, Japan's Defense Ministry said at least three flying objects spotted in Japanese airspace since 2019 were strongly believed to have been Chinese spy balloons. It said it has protested and requested explanations from Beijing.

Senior lawmakers in Japan's governing party on Wednesday said they were considering expanding the Self Defense Force law to also include violations of Japanese airspace by foreign balloons. □

Associated Press

Rise in Horn of Africa migration a worry, says U.N. official

By **EVELYNE MUSAMBI**
Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — The numbers of women and children migrating from the Horn of Africa to Gulf countries through Yemen has significantly increased and is a cause of concern, according to the head of the Inter-

national Organization for Migration. The treacherous journey from Ethiopia, Somalia and Djibouti through Yemen, called the Eastern Migration Route, has seen a 64% increase in the past year of people seeking better livelihoods, with larger numbers of women with

children and children travelling alone, IOM Director General Antonio Vitorino told The Associated Press. Climate change is a driver of the increased migration, he said. In the past, women and children would often opt out of the dangerous journey through the desert mostly made on foot. Previously men would leave their families behind and make the trek in the hope of finding jobs and sending money back home.

"The pressure is mounting" as the numbers of migrants rise, said Vitorino who was in Kenya for the launch of a \$84 million appeal to support more than 1 million migrants using the route through Yemen.

The desperate migrants are vulnerable to criminal gangs along the route and

need protection against rape, violence, traffickers and smugglers, he said.

Some of the migrants are unaware of the dangers including the war in Yemen and the U.N.'s migration organization needs to improve awareness of the perils, he said. For migrants who still choose to take the journey, the organization should offer basic health-care and other services and in some cases return them to their countries of origin, he said. "Last year, we have returned voluntarily to Ethiopia 2,700 migrants and upon arrival we provided post-arrival assistance to support them to move back to their regions of origin," Vitorino said.

Also rising is the migration of people from West Africa through Libya to Europe

and the plight of those migrants, particularly those detained in Libya, is a global concern, he said.

"We know where the official detention centers are and we have access to them, not permanent, never alone, but under surveillance of security guards. But we have access to provide assistance," said Vitorino. But the U.N. organization does not have access to the unofficial detentions centers, which are particularly worrying, he said. Abuses have been widely reported in both official and unofficial detention centers.

Libya's political instability makes it difficult to have the political cooperation needed to dismantle the unofficial detention centers, he said. □



Antonio Vitorino, Director General of the International Organisation for Migration, speaks to The Associated Press in Nairobi, Kenya, Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2023.

Associated Press

Chamber of Commerce holds its annual “meet the Board networking event”



(Oranjestad) –Thursday, February 9th, the Chamber of Commerce of Aruba (KvK) organized a networking event, where invitees enjoyed a delightful evening and also met with the new director of KvK for 2023.

KvK thinks it is important to socialize and maintain close contact with its stakeholders in both private and public sectors. For this event, the chamber would like to also express their gratitude for the overall good communication and cooperation throughout the entire past year. With some touches of carnaval

décor, the event was filled with great ambience and music.

As it is already accustomed, the new president gives out a speech to the public. This year, it is Mr. Gavril Mansur's turn as the new president to share a few words. In his speech, he thanked the audience present at the event and shared his vision on his new role as president, ensuring that the institution will maintain good management with the help from the other members of the board.

Being the representative body of Aruba's com-

merce, the KvK continues to fortify its relationship with the commercial sector, providing as much necessary support for startup businesses as well as long existing businesses. In order to achieve this, it is crucial to work with relevant partners and maintain good contact and relationship.

With the introduction of and changes in certain legislations, KvK will be undertaking various tasks in order to achieve this in a structured way. As was anticipated a few months ago, the new law for UBO (Ultimate Beneficial Owner) registration for companies was finally introduced on January 1st of this year. This is one the tasks that KvK will undertake, like improving and restructuring certain procedures and outdated and inefficient rules that could hinder the approachability of conducting business. This is also without forgetting certain laws that need to be renewed.

Aside from the assigned tasks, KvK will continue to



highlight the importance of providing information and guide to its clients through various informative sessions on relevant topics that will keep businesses up to date with important aspects in the field.

Lastly, Mr. Mansur stated that taking action is important and that promises must be kept, because in the end, this is what counts and ensures progress. Addi-

tionally, private and public sectors must keep working together to ensure stability in the Aruban economy.

KvK would once again like to thank its present invitees for the pleasant evening and hopes for another productive year with the same cooperation from its stakeholders in order to provide good service and support to its clients. □

Kids Youth in Action celebrates Valentine's day with beach activities

(Oranjestad)—For yesterday's Valentine's Day festivities, different schools, local business and organizations celebrated in different way. For this day, the Kids & Youth in Action Foundation invited its members for beach activities, where they played games, danced and enjoyed the global day of love.

The Kids & Youth in Action Foundation focuses on healthy activities for kids after school. The organization primarily consists of little girls 4 years of age and older, who showcase vari-



ous dance styles all around the island. Kids & Youth in Action has been around for 30 years now, and is man-

aged by Ms. Debra Boekhoudt. All year round, the organization is active in different presentations, activi-



ties and lessons for children.

Ariana Lake, member of Kids & Youth in Action and one of the organizers for the day's activities, shared with Bon Dia Aruba that the day was a success and that the children really enjoyed the activities.

“Our teacher gave us

homework to organize this activity to help us with our organizational skills. We organized different games, including water games and games with balls or tubes. We also organized separate sets of games for younger and older children. I learned a lot from the experience,” Lake said. □





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Informative session about dementia with speaker Mrs. Anne Mei The

ORANJESTAD - On February 13, 2023, the Minister of Transport, Integrity, Nature and Elderly Affairs, Mr. Ursell Arends, had the honor to welcome renowned

speaker Mrs. Anne Mei The, a professor by special appointment of Long-Term Care and Social Approach to Dementia at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

Mrs. Anne Mei will speak about dementia on Thursday, February 16, and share her knowledge and a better understanding of this condition.



Dementia is a progressive condition affecting millions of people and their patient's families and caregivers. The characteristics of this condition are the loss of cognitive function, including memory loss, speech ability, and the capacity to solve problems. Although it is a widespread problem, there is more to learn about this condition. The presentation's objective is to raise awareness of the latest developments and improved care practices for those with dementia.



Minister Arends invites all professionals in the care, the community interested, and particularly those working daily with seniors, to attend this informative session on February 16,

2023, from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm at the J.F. Kennedy Education Centre. The session will be in Dutch, and the entrance is free. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions and exchange views. □

Protect your hearing



ORANJESTAD - The Department of Public Health (DVG) reminds all carnival participants, musicians, and the public to be more aware and protect their hearing against loud noises that can affect their hearing for the rest of their lives.

During the carnival season, the DVG urges us to use the following tips:
Always wear earplugs around loud noises;
Do not dance near speakers;
Control if you are wearing your earplugs correctly;

Do not cut the earplugs in half. They can get stuck! Remember that members of organizations like the Quota Club every year are present on the parade route selling earplugs for those participants and spectators in the carnival parades.

Besides Quota Club, earplugs are also available at, among others, Giselle Department Store, Mrs. Minute. K&G Piedra Plat, FE-POH (Foundation for Hearing Impaired Aruba), and the Specialist. □

Aruba to me



ORANJESTAD — You are back or still enjoying your vacation?... we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

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Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Costa Linda Beach Resort

EAGLE BEACH - Recently, Aruba Tourism Authority representative Ms. Marouska Heyliger had the great pleasure in honoring many loyal Aruba visitors with their distinctive certificates. These certificates are a

way to say "Masha Danki" for continuously choosing Aruba as a favorite vacation destination. The titles are as following: 10+ years "Distinguished Visitor", 20+ years "Goodwill Ambassador" and 36+ years "Emer-

ald Ambassador".

The honoree is Jeffrey Schlotman who is a resident from New York. He has been honored as Goodwill Ambassador of Aruba.



This symbolic honorary title is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba between the 10-20-35 and more consecutive year mark.

The couple loves coming to the island for its year-round sunny weather, the friendliest people, the sincerity of Aruba's people, the cleanliness of the island and the

fact that it's the best place in the world to vacation.

Ms. Marouska Heyliger representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and members of Costa Linda Beach Resort bestowed the Ambassador certification to the honorees, presented them with gifts, and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination and their home-away-from-home. □

Can I have a ..., please?

ORANJESTAD — Want to taste something different for a change?? How about a different breakfast from what you are used to at your hotel. Hop in your car, drive around and anywhere around the island you will come across a local snack shop.

Here you will find all types of snacks loved by the lo-

cals. Try a pastechi, a Caribbean pastry filled with cheese or meat and fried up deliciously. Or perhaps you might want to try a croquette, a crusty little meat ball. A dedito is also a good option, it's a stick made out of cheese or hotdog. If you want to try something more familiar go for a homemade hamburger or a ham and cheese toast,

but with a local touch. All these snacks are ridiculously addictive. Freshen up with a delicious fruit shake (batido) made out of watermelon, strawberry, banana, papaya or just mix any fruit together. What makes these little snack shops more attractive is the warmth of its people and with the smile you are being served. □



History of fishing in Aruba

ORANJESTAD — Fishing has been a family tradition for ages in Aruba. Our ancestors used to fish for a living. Even though nowadays you don't see them often we still have some passionate fishermen on the island that go out every day in search for fish to feed their families and serve our local market. One of these fishermen is Gregory Wernet.

The so-called Continental Bank between Aruba and the opposite coast reaches a depth of about 650 feet. The sea is very rich in fish here. Since the time of the indigenous native people fish and other sea creatures such as turtles, octopus squids, conch and many type of crustaceans have formed a means of subsistence for the native Aruban inhabitants. Especially along the west coast of the island where the fishing grounds are settlements of fishermen. Until the arrival of the oil -industry Aruban fishermen could supply Aruba's wants.

As a source of income, however, fishing did not amount too much. In the beginning of the 1900's approximately 160 people earn their living in this branch of this industry. Rancho, which stands for a shed, nowadays east Oranjestad, was the head quarter and remains the fishermen's settlement. Sa-

vaneta, Noord, Santa Cruz all had their fishermen's villages. At a rough estimate there were about a hundred small fishing boats during that time.

The Arubans were mainly engaged in coastal fishing, using rowing-boats or small sailing-boats, and lines or dragnets and canisters in shallow water. When fishing with deep-sea lines just over the bottom of the sea the boat is kept in place by means of a piece of rock serving as an anchor. The two most important species of fish by far caught in this manner are the pargo or red snappers and a variety of groupers like the mero, jeanpao and the wowo di boyo.

Cruising off the coast the Aruban fisherman patiently waits for a fish willing to snap at the bait on the drag-line, in nets and traps. Veritable giants are sometimes caught. Barracudas weigh from 9 to 44 pounds and measure from 3 to almost 7 feet. The king-fish has a weight from 22 to 44 pounds; the moclat may tip the scales at 155, whilst garfish, having a length of nine feet, weigh over 132 pounds.

Most fish caught is used for their own consumption, to feed their families and some are being sold in the market to local restaurants.



Fisherman Gregory Wernet

Gregory Wernet is a well-known fisherman from Santa Cruz. His father taught him fishing when he was a small child. Gregory has two sons, Jordan and Jordanny, which he taught fishing too, when they were only 3 years old and he takes them fishing with him. Fishing has been a family tradition for quite a long time and even his grandson Willvion of 7 years old is following his grandfather steps. This is the sixth generation of fishermen in their family.

They go deep sea fishing. There they catch red snapper, grouper and amberjack. They usually fish for 15 hours a day, but now due to the covid-19 measurements they go fishing from 5 in the morning until

8 o'clock at night or even sometimes from 8 at night till 5 in the morning. The day before they prepare all their fishing tools such as the Lines, lures, spears, and load their boat with fishing reels, batteries, fill the gaso-

line tank, lights and some food and beverages. For bait he uses sardines, squid and the small fish known in Aruba as piskechi. The have two boats they use for fishing. 'Virgen del Valle' which is parked at the pier by the Seaport and 'Padrot' which they have at home.

The fish they catch they take home to their families and they also sell it to their clients. Gregory is proud to be a fisherman. It is a honest and humble job but with it he is able to feed his family even during hard times. It is a very dangerous job and you have to spend many hours on the sea, waiting patiently and risking your life while fighting a big fish and big waves but the adrenaline it brings with it but also just sitting there listening to the sound of the waves and enjoying the marvelous view that nature has to offer is all worth it. □

Source: Etnia Nativa



SVGA celebrates carnaval

(Oranjestad)—Yesterday, the Foundation for the Mentally Disabled Aruba (SVGA), held its own carnival celebrations. Our reporter sat down with Mrs. Elvira Tromp, director of the 'Man na Obra' Center—one of the funding departments, who explained a little more about the celebration and the foundation.

"After two years, we at SVGA are happy to be able to celebrate Carnival again with all of our funding departments. Thanks to the cooperation of the general manager at Renaissance Wind CreekCasio, who collaborated with SVGA for many years already, we were able to celebrate carnival at the Renaissance Convention Center," Tromp said.

For SVGA, it is tradition to celebrate Carnival and they have been doing this for 20 years already at the convention center. She explained that clients are the ones that are always asking for Carnival celebrations each year.

During the last two years, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the foundation could not keep up with its tradition. However, clients and employees were finally able to celebrate together: "We are happy to be together again to celebrate Aruba's 69th annual Carnival," Tromp expressed.

Tromp pointed out that in previous years, it is true that different clients of theirs participate in the Carnival parades, sometimes joined by the foundation too or other parties. They also have clients whose parents also include them in the parades. However, as an organization, they did not partake in the public festivities this year. "Hopefully we will be able to stimulate our clients to join the parades again," she added.

Tromp continued explaining that the pandemic affected the foundations and its clients, and this made it so that most clients



were not able to get full time assistance. They could only be provided with assistance a few days in the week at best.

For this reason, the foundation had to modify their programs; everyone needed to get accustomed to social distancing, face masks etc. Now that everything is back to normal, Tromp expressed that they are very happy, but are still taking necessary precautions.

In terms of this year's expectations for this foundation, Tromp remarked that they would like to see more inclusion of their clients within the Aruban community: "Don't ignore them because they are disabled; they are also a part of our community. Wherever possible, include them, invite them, and let them participate alongside the rest of the community," she highlighted.

SVGA was officially founded on December 9th, 1964, under the name "Stichting ter behartiging van de belangen van het gehandicapte kind" (Foundation for the protection of the interests of the disabled child). The organization's mission is to take care, guide and teach disabled people self-

development according to their disability. The goal is to provide care and higher education to those with disabilities, so they can also have a chance at a high-quality life within the community, where their caretakers, professionals and the clients themselves can work together.

SVGA has different departments. It consists of an elementary school (Scol Duna un Man), where children attend up to the age of 16. The department of Bibito Pin, which is a day care for children who are just starting out, also accepts children from the ages of 2 up to 16 years old. Depending on the development of the child, they will evaluate where the child may go next, whether it is school or another department.

The department of Briyodi Solo is also a day care for adults starting from the ages of 16. Adults stay in this department until they are ready to participate in the department's initiative. The same counts for the Man di Obra Center, where they take children of 16 years of age. These children stay in the department until they are ready to participate with the center's goal initiative. □



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 45 Throws

1 Places for
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26 Not new

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29 Matching

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36 Gym shoe

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41 Be patient
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46 Tire tracks

DOWN

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card game

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Yesterday's answer

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2-16

A X Y D L B A A X R
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

2-16

CRYPTOQUOTE

U L X J K D T S Z D X X D X I R P I E R J K R

K P V V N I O D X P J A P V A N V

E R I K R J I J X J U S N X X J O C D I N

O D X J C D V I . — Y J K I N Z R L F N

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: LET THE WAVES
CARRY YOU WHERE THE LIGHT CAN NOT. —
MOHIT KAUSHIK



Bottles of Coca-Cola are on display at a grocery market in Uniontown, Pa, on Sunday, April 24, 2022.

Associated Press

Coke sees slower growth ahead as price hikes moderate

By DEE-ANN DURBIN
AP Business Writer

Coca-Cola said higher prices didn't hurt demand for its drinks in the fourth quarter, but it expects slower growth ahead as inflation cools and price increases moderate. The Atlanta company said Tuesday it expects organic revenue growth of 7% to 8% this year which would be half the 16% growth it delivered in 2022. Higher prices were a big contributor to Coke's revenue growth last year as it tried to compensate for rising costs of raw ingredients, labor and transportation. Pricing and mix which includes changes in package sizes contributed 12% to revenue growth in the fourth quarter, while concentrate sales rose 2%, Coke said. Marketing costs also increased as Coke tried to grow sales in booming markets like India. In addition to shrinking can sizes or offering cheaper, returnable bottles in some markets, Coke has been promoting more expensive products, like soft drinks in slimmer cans. It has high

hopes for Jack and Coke, a ready-to-drink cocktail made with Jack Daniel's whiskey, which will go on sale in the U.S. at the end of March. "We need to earn our pricing by delivering for consumers a value they appreciate," Chairman and CEO James Quincey said Tuesday in a conference call. Quincey said Coke will continue to raise prices this year globally, but its price increases in developed markets will likely moderate along with inflation.

Coke's revenue rose 7% to \$10.1 billion in the October-December period, the company said Tuesday. That was slightly ahead of Wall Street forecasts, according to analysts polled by FactSet. □

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In which Winnie the Pooh stars in an R-rated slasher movie

By JAKE COYLE

AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The Hundred Acre Wood has seen some pretty unsettling things over the years. A honey jar shortage. Rather blustery days. The omnipresent threat of a Heffalump. But in "Winnie the Pooh: Blood and Honey," a new microbudget R-rated horror film, Pooh wades into far darker territory than even Eeyore could have ever imagined. After 95 years of saying things like "A hug is always the right size," Pooh newly freed from copyright is now violently terrorizing a remote house of young women.

Countless cherished characters have passed into public domain before, but perhaps never so abruptly and savagely as Pooh.

Pooh, Piglet, Kanga, Roo, Owl, Eeyore and Christopher Robin all became public domain on January 1 last year when the copyright on A.A. Milne's 1926 book, "Winnie-the-Pooh," with illustrations by E.H. Shepard, expired. Just a year later, Pooh and Piglet can now be found on a murderous rampage in nationwide movie theaters a head-spinning development that's happened faster than a bear could say "Oh, bother."

Depending on how you look at it, "Winnie the Pooh: Blood and Honey" is either a crass way to capitalize on a beloved bear or an ingenious bit of independent filmmaking foresight. Either way, it's probably a harbinger of what's to come.

In the next 10 years, some of the most iconic characters in pop culture including Bugs Bunny, Batman and Superman will pass into public domain, or at least their most early incarnations. Some elements of Pooh are still off-limits, like his red shirt, since they apply to later interpretations. Tigger, who debuted in 1928's "The House at Pooh Corner," isn't public until 2024. Many have next Jan. 1 circled. That's when the original version of Mickey Mouse, from "Steamboat Willie," becomes public



This image released by Fathom Events shows Craig David Dowsett, in a scene from "Winnie the Pooh: Blood and Honey."

domain. It will be open on season on the face of the Walt Disney Co. or at least that early whistling variety of Mickey.

Pop culture, as a concept, was born in the 1920s, meaning many of the most indelible and still very culturally present works will fall into public domain in the coming years. There will be all kinds of new and unlikely contexts for some of these characters. Some could be wonderful, some schlocky. But "Winnie Pooh: Blood and Honey" may just be a taste of what's in store.

"When Superman and Batman fall into the public domain, there's going to be some wild films, I'm sure of it," says "Winnie the Pooh: Blood and Honey" writer, director and co-producer Rhys Waterfield. "There's going to be so many different and cool unique iterations coming off that. I might do one."

Though made for less than \$100,000, "Winnie the Pooh: Blood and Honey" will open Friday on some 1,500 screens in North America, an unusually wide release for such a little-funded movie. It's already made \$1 million in Mexico and has many more international territories booked. For Waterfield, a British film producer of direct-to-DVD titles (credits include "Dinosaur Hotel" and "Easter Killling"), it's already a hit way beyond expectation.

"I kind of thought this could

do a small theatrical run in some places and do quite well commercially," says Waterfield. "But it's blown up way beyond that to a scale that's absolutely insane."

In a 2021 tally of media franchises by Statista, Winnie the Pooh, with \$80.3 billion in worldwide revenue, tied Mickey Mouse for No. 3, trailing only Pokémon and Hello Kitty. But unlike them, Pooh accounts for a veritable religion for his kind-hearted witticisms and contented spiritual outlook. Pooh is as much a gentle sage as he is a round-tummied toon. When Waterfield realized Pooh was entering public domain, "I had a spark in my eye," he says. Here was much-coveted intellectual property that could sell just about any film. "I've never met anyone that doesn't know who Winnie the Pooh is," Waterfield said in a recent phone interview speaking from Amsterdam.

But certainly, not everyone has been so happy about the idea of one of the most benevolent bears turning feral monster. Waterfield says he receives daily messages telling him he's evil, and even some death threats. One person said they were calling the police. "You've got to be pretty thick-skinned to do a movie like this," Waterfield says. "It baffles me. People think making an alternative version of him is somehow

infiltrating their mind and destroying their memories. When I get claims that I ruined people's childhoods, I'm genuinely confused. I just kind of brush it off and carry on making more of them."

Waterfield is already planning sequels with Peter Pan, Bambi and many more. (The Felix Salten book "Bambi, A Life in the Woods" also became public domain last year.)

Jennifer Jenkins, a professor of law and director of Duke's Center for the Study of Public Domain, is used to operating in a relatively quiet and byzantine realm of copyright law and thorny rights issues. She writes an annual Jan. 1 column for "Public Domain Day." But nothing has caused her phone to ring off the hook quite like "Winnie the Pooh: Blood and Honey."

The movie has clearly touched a nerve; millions have watched its trailer online. (Typical comment: "I can't believe that this movie is real.") And Jenkins, a firm believer in the long-range benefits of public domain, has been somewhat bemused by the storm kicked up by a movie like "Winnie the Pooh: Blood and Honey." She compares public domain issues like these to the way free speech is a right, regardless of whether you agree with what's said.

"Some uses of public domain material will be wel-

come to some and disturbing to others," Jenkins says. "But I don't think new content uniformly saps the value of the original work. I have the original books. I adore them. The fact that this slasher film is out there has no effect whatsoever on how I feel about A.A. Milne's original creation or E.H. Shepard's pencil sketches."

It's worth noting that much of the Disney empire was, itself, built on public domain. "Beauty and the Beast" comes from Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont's 1756 version of the fairy tale. "Sleeping Beauty" came from Charles Perrault's 1697 fairy tale. "Aladdin" comes from the folk tale collection "The Book of One Thousand and One Nights."

Though Jenkins can't think of too many characters who had such a jarring entry to public domain as Pooh, films like "Pride and Prejudice and Zombies" (2016) and the 2021 book "The Great Gatsby Undead" are reference points. "People love adding zombies to public domain works," says Jenkins.

To her, "Winnie the Pooh: Blood and Honey" may not be the most glorious example of the effects of public domain, but it's part of a process that human creativity depends upon and thrives on. "Blood and Honey" may not make a lasting mark in the Hundred Acre Woods, but something, someday will. Chalk it up to growing pains.

"The fact that some people may be disturbed or revolted by this particular re-use of some of the characters from Winnie the Pooh doesn't detract from the value of the public domain," says Jenkins.

"This is how people throughout history have created. They've always drawn on or been inspired by earlier works. Time will tell with this movie or any other reuse of Winnie the Pooh and Piglet whether movies like this will be rewarded in the marketplace or have any enduring appeal.

"My thing is always: Time will tell." □

MLB's spring training a test run for new rule changes

By **DAVID BRANDT**

AP Sports Writer

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (AP)

— Spring training games might be a little ugly this year, particularly during the first few weeks.

For Major League Baseball, that's a feature, not a bug. The Grapefruit and Cactus League games in Florida and Arizona over the next month will be used as a petri dish for the sport's rule changes, including a pitch clock, bigger bases and limits to infield shifts. The idea is that the worst kinks will be worked out before opening day on March 30. Though there's multiple innovations, one stands above the rest.

"The pitch timer is by far the biggest change that's coming this season," said MLB executive vice president Morgan Sword said Tuesday. "Frankly, it's probably the biggest change that's been made to baseball in most of our lifetimes." The pitch clock has been tested for a few years at the minor league level. Pitchers will have 15 seconds to deliver their pitch with no runners on base and 20 seconds when runners are on base. There will be 30 seconds between batters and 2 minutes, 15 seconds between innings.

MLB games averaged 3 hours, 4 minutes last season



The new, larger base is seen with the older, smaller base at Salt River Field Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2023, in Scottsdale, Ariz.

following the introduction of the PitchCom electronic device to signal pitches, down from a record 3:10 in 2021. Sword said MLB's research indicates fans prefer games that are around 2:30.

The pitch clock's effect on minor league games in 2022 was substantial. Games that used the clock were, on average, 25 minutes shorter than those that did not.

"Fans want a crisper pace," Sword said.

Sword said umpires will be watching for more balks

when runners are on base. Some pitchers particularly relievers have funky idiosyncrasies in their deliveries and never come to a complete stop before delivering a pitch.

That's technically a balk, but umpires usually let those ticks slide.

A complete stop with no movement becomes more significant because the pitch clock operator turns off the clock once the pitcher's motion toward the plate begins.

Balks rose to 924 during a 1988 crackdown from 356

the previous year, then declined to 407 in 1989 and 288 in 1990. The total has been under 200 annually since 1989 and was 122 last year.

Sword said many MLB players who spent time in the minors during 2022 grew to appreciate the clock, even though there was an adjustment period. He said most players needed a few weeks to a month to get used to the changes, which is about the length of spring training's game schedule.

Sword said the rule changes will be "full go" from the

first day of spring training. That might lead to some irritated players and awkward moments during late February's spring training games.

Former big league pitcher Joe Martinez, who is MLB's vice president for on-field strategy, demonstrated some of the logistics on Tuesday at Talking Stick Field, spring training home of the Arizona Diamondbacks and Colorado Rockies. He also detailed some of the technology that will be used to make the new pitch clock system happen, including buzzers for umpires, which vibrate when a pitcher has run out of time. Here are some other updates as MLB camps get going in Florida and Arizona.

MLB said it's looking forward to a season without COVID-19 as a main concern. The past three seasons have at least been partially affected by the virus, which shut down spring training during March 2020. No fans were allowed to attend games during the shortened 2020 regular season and attendance was severely curtailed at many parks through much of 2021, when the average crowd was 18,901. Last year's average of 26,843 was down 5.3% from 2019's 28,339. □

Associated Press

Kanaan to make final start at Indy 500 before retiring again



Tony Kanaan, of Brazil, watches during qualifications for the Indianapolis 500 auto race at Indianapolis Motor Speedway, May 21, 2022, in Indianapolis.

Associated Press

By **MICHAEL MAROT**

AP Sports Writer

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) —

Tony Kanaan, the 2013 Indianapolis 500 champ, said Wednesday he will compete in IndyCar's biggest race this May before retiring again.

The 48-year-old Brazilian made the announcement on Twitter.

He is scheduled to appear at a news conference in Indianapolis later Wednesday as part of the 100-day countdown to this year's 500. The race is May 28.

"It's been a wonderful incredible journey, but it's not done yet," he said in

a video shot at Indianapolis Motor Speedway as the highlight calls fade away. "I will still have the pleasure to drive through the bricks one last time. Thank you all and I'll see you on race day."

For one of the series' most popular, most successful and longest-tenured drivers, this is becoming part of an annual ritual.

He first announced that 2020 would be his last "Last Lap" season as series officials created a special logo for his five-race farewell tour. But when the COVID-19 pandemic forced the 500 to be moved from

May until August and then ran with no fans in the seats, Kanaan didn't think it was the proper way to say goodbye.

So he returned in 2021 and then in January 2022 announced he would return again that season, too, this time as a teammate of seven-time Cup champ Jimmie Johnson on the powerhouse Chip Ganassi Racing team.

While Johnson finished 28th in his first 500, at age 46, Kanaan revved up the crowd by qualifying sixth, finishing third and refiring his hopes of coming back once more in 2023. □

Tiger Woods returns to golf with the same belief he can win

By DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Tiger Woods feels good enough to play at Riviera, his first tournament with a cut and without a cart since the British Open last July. He already is looking ahead to the Masters. And yes, he thinks he can win.

"I would not have put myself out here if I didn't think I could beat these guys," Woods said Tuesday ahead of the Genesis Invitational, which has attracted 19 of the top 20 players in the world.

He also is well aware that he has not won since October 2019, and that at age 47 and with more surgeries than major titles (15), time is running out. He knows that. He's just not quite ready to



Tiger Woods tees off on the 4th hole during the final round of the PNC Championship golf tournament Sunday, Dec. 18, 2022, in Orlando, Fla.

Associated Press

accept it.

He marvels at how long

Tom Brady lasted. He re-

members when John Elway

retired from the Denver

Broncos because his body

could no longer recover the way it once did. Golf is not a contact sport, but it has become a young man's game.

Only two of the top 10 players in golf are in their 30s. The oldest is Rory McIlroy at 33.

Woods can play. The question is whether he can compete, whether he can win. He remains at 82 career PGA Tour titles, a record he shares with Sam Snead, who was 67 when he made the cut at a PGA Championship.

Part of Woods was annoyed that he was celebrated for making the cut in the Masters last year, his first competition since a February 2021 car crash outside Los Angeles shattered bones in his right leg and ankle.

"I'm there to get a W, OK? So I don't understand that making the cut is a great thing," Woods said. "If I entered the event, it's always to get a W."

There will come a point in time when my body will not allow me to do that anymore, and it's probably sooner rather than later. But wrapping my ahead around that transition and being the ambassador role and just trying to be out here with the guys, no, that's not in my DNA." He played that ambassador role last year at the Genesis Invitational as the tournament host. He also is leading the private player meetings geared toward building a new PGA Tour model of elite tournaments as a response to Saudi-funded LIV Golf.

His announcement Friday that he was playing led to a scramble for media credentials. The back of the press room in the Riviera clubhouse was lined with some two dozen photographers waiting for him to show up for his news conference.

Justin Rose watched in December as Woods played with his son at the PNC Championship, riding in a cart. Woods has been saying he can hit all the shots, that it's walking to them that makes it difficult. □

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